Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An antimicrobial, tubular, single- or multilayer polymer-based plastics foodstuff casing having an inner and outer suface, wherein the casing comprises polyamide or polyamide layers and wherein the casing is premoistened so as to be ready-to-fill, which comprises, as antimicrobial constituent, an alkyl para-hydroxybenzoate and/or a salt thereof, wherein the antimicrobial constituent is applied to the inner or to the inner and outer surface of the casing and wherein the polyamide casings or polyamide layers absorb up to about 6% by weight of water.

2. (Currently Amended) The foodstuff casing as claimed in claim 1, wherein the alkyl para-hydroxybenzoate or its salt contains from 1 to 10[[,]] carbon atoms in an alkyl moiety.

3. (Previously Presented) The foodstuff casing as claimed in claim 1, wherein the alkyl para-hydroxybenzoate and/or its salt has been combined with at least one other antimicrobial agent.

4. (Previously Presented) The foodstuff casing as claimed in claim 3, wherein the other antimicrobial agent is an agent which reduces water activity.

5. (Original) The foodstuff casing as claimed in claim 4, wherein the agent which reduces water activity is glycerol or propanediol.

6. (Previously Presented) The foodstuff casing as claimed in claim1, wherein an inner side thereof is impregnated with at least one component which improves peelability.

7. (original) The foodstuff casing as claimed in claim 6, wherein the component which improves peelability is a cellulose derivative or starch derivative, an alginate, or chitosan.

8. (Previously Presented) A process for the production of the foodstuff casing as claimed in claim 1, which comprises premoistening the casing with an aqueous solution in which the proportion of all of the antimicrobial agents together is from 0.1 to 8% by weight, based on the weight of the solution.

9. (Currently Amended) The process as claimed in claim 8, wherein the alkyl para-hydroxybenzoate and/or its salt is applied in one step with water serving for premoistening [[an]]the inner and/or the outer side of the casing.

10. (Original) The process as claimed in claim 9, wherein the aqueous solution is applied by spraying.

11. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 10, wherein the aqueous solution is applied with the aid of a spray mandrel to an inner side of the casing, while said casing is shirred.

12. (Original) The process as claimed in claim 11, wherein the aqueous solution comprises at least one component which makes the casing easy to peel.

13. (Previously Presented) A synthetic sausage-casing comprising a casing of claim 1.

14. (Previously Presented) A casing of claim 2 having 1 to 6 carbon atoms in the alkyl moiety.

15. (Previously Presented) A casing of claim 2 having 2 to 5 carbon atoms in the alkyl moiety.

16. (Previously Presented) The foodstuff casing as claimed in claim 2, wherein the alkyl para-hydroxybenzoate and/or its salt has been combined with at least one other antimicrobial agent.

17. (Previously Presented) A process of claim 8, wherein said antimicrobial agents are present in a proportion from 0.2 to 2% by weight based on the weight of the solution.

18. (Previously Presented) A process for the production of the foodstuff casing as claimed in claim 2, which comprises premoistening the casing with an aqueous solution in which the proportion of all of the antimicrobial agents together is from 0.1 to 8% by weight, based on the weight of the solution.

19. (Previously Presented) A process for the production of the foodstuff casing as claimed in claim 3, which comprises premoistening the casing with an aqueous solution in which the proportion of all of the antimicrobial agents together is from 0.1 to 8% by weight, based on the weight of the solution.

20. (Previously Presented) A synthetic sausage-casing comprising a casing of claim 2.